

Book reviews

Sexually Transmitted Diseases. By C. B. S. SCHOFIELD. 2nd edition, 1975. Pp. 261, 12 figs. Churchill-Livingstone, Edinburgh (£2.00)

The appearance of the second edition of a text book 3 years after its first publication may be taken as good evidence of its popularity. These paper-backed volumes of the Livingstone Medical Text Series are not immune from the effects of inflation—prices having nearly doubled—but even so, the second edition of 'Sexually Transmitted Diseases' now costs only £2 and represents extraordinarily good value.

For its size it is surprisingly detailed and deals with all aspects of the subject, with excellent chapters on the public health and medico-social management of these disorders, a subject which is in need of emphasis in a text-book. An adequate account of some of the sociological and psychological factors of importance in the background of these illnesses is given in a short separate chapter.

The venereal diseases, syphilis and gonorrhoea, are fully, accurately, and readably covered with a particularly good account of the serological tests for syphilis and their interpretation which is completely up to date.

The other sexually-transmitted infections are well covered and in detail—account clearly being taken of the fact that nowadays in most clinics, in the United Kingdom at any rate, such conditions form the bulk of the caseload. In this context it is perhaps a little disappointing that no mention is made in the chapter on genital candidosis of perhaps the most important complication of vaginal thrush—namely dyspareunia, which can so frequently lead to the development of important psychosexual disorders and much marital discord.

The complex problem of non-specific genital infection and Reiter's disease is efficiently dealt with in two chapters and a clear up-to-date account is given of the important part played by chlamydial infections. In the section on Reiter's disease the statement that Reiter's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and arthropathic psoriasis may be one of a spectrum of diseases is confusing as it implies that all three disorders may be aetiologically connected.

Finally, there are adequate accounts of other conditions affecting the genitalia, tropical sexually-transmitted diseases, and the tropical treponematoses. This book is to be highly recommended as a brief, accurate, readable, and inexpensive volume especially suitable for medical

students, nurses, and all those involved in dealing with this increasingly important group of infectious diseases.

J. K. Oates

Venereal Diseases. By A. KING and C. NICOL. 3rd ed., 1975. Pp. 384, 180 figs, 5 col. pl. Baillière Tindall, London (£7.50)

Five years have elapsed since the last edition of this textbook was published. This edition follows the same general format and a change in type and paper has produced a slightly smaller volume. The illustrations are now placed nearer the relevant part of the text and this is a helpful improvement. Despite current economic stringencies, the number of excellent monochrome illustrations is unchanged and an additional colour plate has been included.

Although the title "Venereal Diseases" is retained, the other sexually-transmitted diseases are fully covered. Separate chapters are now devoted to the important subjects of genital herpes and genital candidosis. The section on gonorrhoea has been considerably enlarged and there is greater emphasis on blood-borne complications. The chapter on non-specific genital infection has been enlarged and recent studies on the aetiology of this condition are briefly reviewed. The problem of recognizing non-specific genital infection in the female is also considered; the authors take the view that the most important factor in diagnosing this condition in the female is knowledge of infection in a male partner.

As in the previous edition a number of references are included. These have been brought up-to-date and extended, particularly in the section on gonorrhoea. No attempt has been made to include a complete bibliography, but references have been selected to provide important new information or to illustrate areas of controversy.

The book remains well laid out with each section clearly headed and the new type is easy to read. Although the price has doubled since the last edition it is not expensive compared with that of some medical text books. This edition remains good value for money and like its predecessors can be thoroughly recommended.

R. N. T. Thin